The momentous Brown v. Topeka Board of Education decision handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court on May 17, 1954, has resulted in great changes to our nation's education system, including significant changes to the University of Georgia School of Law. Where once only white males were enrolled in the school, today the School of Law has a racially diverse student body, and men and women are represented in almost equal numbers.

97th Sibley Lecture

Official Welcome

Michael F. Adams
University of Georgia President

Introduction of Sibley Lecturer

Rebecca H. White
Georgia Law Interim Dean

Sibley Lecture

Chester C. Davenport (LL.B.'66)
First African-American Graduate of Georgia Law
and Georgetown Partners Managing Director

Intermission
Panel Discussion Welcome

Rebecca H. White
Georgia Law Interim Dean

Introduction of Panelists

Larry E. Blount
Panel Moderator and
Georgia Law Associate Professor

Panel Discussion

Robert Benham (J.D.’70)
Second African-American Graduate of Georgia Law
and Supreme Court of Georgia Justice
(also First African American to Serve on the Court)

Chester C. Davenport (LL.B.’66)
First African-American Graduate of Georgia Law and
Georgetown Partners Managing Director

Francys Johnson
Current Georgia Law Third-year Student

Sharon “Nyota” Tucker (J.D.’74)
First African-American Female Graduate of Georgia Law and
Albany State University Assistant Professor of Political Science

Horace T. Ward
First African American to Seek Admission to Georgia Law and
U.S. District Court Northern District of Georgia Senior Judge

Closing Remarks

Rebecca H. White
Georgia Law Interim Dean

There will be a reception immediately following the panel discussion
on the Presidents Club Garden Patio, North Campus.
A 1970 graduate of Georgia Law, Benham is the immediate past chief justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia. He began his judicial career on the Georgia Court of Appeals where he served for six years. Then, he was appointed to the Georgia Supreme Court in 1989 where he served as a justice until 1994, when he became the presiding justice. In 1995, he became the chief justice, a position he held until 2001.

Benham currently serves on the board of curators of the Georgia Historical Society and the board of directors of the Georgia Preservation and Trust, the National Bar Association's Judicial Council and other organizations.

Blount joined the faculty of Georgia Law in 1976, and he currently teaches courses on federal income tax, partnership, corporate tax, tax policy, and law and religion.

Blount was involved in the last major revision of the Constitution for the state of Georgia. He also played a role in the unification of the city of Athens and Clarke County. His research interests relate to tax policy and affirmative action issues. In addition, Blount serves as faculty advisor to the Black Law Students Association.

He earned his law degree from the University of Cincinnati and a Master of Laws from Columbia University.
Davenport, the first African-American graduate of Georgia Law, is currently the managing director of Georgetown Partners, a private merchant-banking firm located in Bethesda, Md. Prior to founding this firm in 1987, he was the chairman of GTE Consumer Services, the largest cellular telephone company serving the Chicago and St. Louis markets, and Envirotest Systems Corporation, the world’s leading provider of auto emissions testing services. He also served as assistant secretary of transportation for policy and international affairs from 1977 to 1979 during the Carter Administration.

Davenport is a member of the Georgia and District of Columbia bar associations.

Francys Johnson, Panelist

In addition to being a third-year student at Georgia Law, Johnson has served in the evangelistic and pastoral ministry for over 10 years. He is the founder of Christ Ministries and pastor of the historic Mount Moriah Baptist Church of Pembroke, Ga.

Johnson represented law students of color across the South as the southern region director of the national board of directors of the Black Law Students Association, in which he also served as national chaplain. In addition, he is vice president of the UGA Christian Legal Society and a certified dispute mediator. He will graduate from UGA in May having earned his Juris Doctor.
SHARON "NYOTA" TUCKER, PANELIST

In 1974, Tucker became the first African-American female graduate of Georgia Law. She currently teaches legal studies courses in Albany State University’s political science department.

Prior to becoming a professor, Tucker worked at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in San Francisco, Calif., and Georgia Legal Services in Albany, Ga., and served as an attorney in private practice. In 1991, she was selected as a Fulbright-Hays Fellow and traveled to Southern Africa to study social and economic changes in that region of the world.

HORACE T. WARD, PANELIST

In 1950, Ward became the first African American to formally seek admission to Georgia Law. After being denied admission, he filed a law suit in the federal district court contending racial discrimination. However, after several years and a trial, the case was eventually dismissed on technical grounds. Determined to achieve his educational goals, Ward earned his law degree at Northwestern University in 1959 and later returned to the state of Georgia to practice law. As a lawyer, he handled significant civil rights cases, one of which resulted in the eventual integration of UGA.

In 1979, Ward was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia by President Jimmy Carter. In 1994, he took senior judge status.
The Brown v. Topeka Board of Education program, hosted by Georgia Law, is proudly sponsored by the Charles Loridans Foundation of Atlanta in tribute to the late John A. Sibley. Sibley was a 1911 graduate of the law school.